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WASHINGTON, D.C.- Norm Dicks, Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee, gave the following statement on the House floor during consideration of H.Res. 44, a two week Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government.

DICKS' STATEMENT ON GOP SHORT-TERM CONTINUING RESOLUTION

"Today we will consider a short-term Continuing Resolution that will allow the essential functions of our government to continue beyond March 4th, the date on which the current Continuing Resolution will expire. With no final agreement on the spending levels for the current fiscal year, this measure is necessary in order to avoid a government shutdown – something I believe we all should want to do.

"When the House approved H.R. 1 earlier this month, despite the overwhelming opposition of the Democratic Caucus, it was clear to me that gaining agreement on a compromise version of a full-year Continuing Resolution would be very difficult, at least before the expiration of the current Continuing Resolution. We opposed H.R. 1 because we believe it would have the effect of slamming on the fiscal brakes too abruptly, resulting in higher unemployment and threatening our nation's economic recovery. There is no dispute that cutting federal spending too deeply and too quickly, before the economy has fully recovered, risks slowing growth and losing jobs. Moody's estimates that H.R. 1 would reduce real growth in 2011 by 0.5%, meaning 400,000 fewer jobs in 2011 and 700,000 fewer jobs by the end of 2012. The Economic Policy Institute projected job losses nearer 800,000. Goldman Sachs predicts that H.R. 1 would slow economic growth by between 1.5 and 2 percentage which translates into the American economy losing up to 2.4 million jobs.

"So the recovery of our economy and the reduction of unemployment should be our paramount

concerns at this time. I said during the debate on H.R. 1 earlier this month and I will repeat today that I believe the approach to deficit reduction that has been adopted by the Republican Majority here in the House is far too narrow and too focused on the smallest segment of spending in the budget. It is a risky strategy, based on the specious concept of "cut and grow" which, of course, has no basis in sound economic theory.

"So where does that leave us? We are now six months into the current fiscal year, FY 2011, and hearings with regard to the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget have begun in both the Budget Committee and the Appropriations Committee. H.R. 1 is clearly not acceptable to the other body, nor would it be acceptable to the President, whose signature is necessary before any funding bill can become law. What the President has already proposed for the coming year – a budget freeze at last year's levels – remains in my judgment the best and most effective way to reduce the deficit and to support recovery in major sectors of our economy. And, in fact, we have already adopted a freeze at FY 2010 levels in the Continuing Resolution that we are currently operating under. Democrats approved this CR in December – with ONE vote from the Republican Caucus-- which represents a reduction of \$41 billion from the levels sought by the President in his FY 2011 request – a significant reduction in the deficit. I want to repeat this: The \$41 billion cut from the Obama FY 2011 budget was passed in a CR by the Democratic House and Senate and signed into law by President Obama with only ONE Republican vote.

"We are now on the verge of an expiring CR and we are considering another version that extends the time to resolve these differences by only two weeks. I take the Chairman at his word ... that neither he nor his leadership is interested in shutting down the operations of the federal government by declaring a stalemate in these appropriations deliberations. I will concede that it is disconcerting to me and others on our side to read the Speaker's comments this week that would seem to imply that there is a strategy of passing shorter-term appropriations bills including further and further and further cuts. We were concerned by his statement that seemed to indicate a plan for a piecemeal approach to future spending cuts. He said: "If they won't eat the whole loaf at one time, we'll make them eat it one slice at a time."

"I believe we need to set aside these political considerations and get serious about finishing up work on the Fiscal Year 2011 budget. And I think it is obvious that we are going to need more than the next two weeks to get from here to there. I appreciate the desire of the gentleman from Kentucky to encourage the members of his caucus to enter into serious negotiations with the other body, with the hope of completing work by March 18th."

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